

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10, 14, and 15 are pending. Claims 1, 4, 7, and 14 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced. Applicants believe the claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Applicants note that the feature of setting the inspection condition automatically by accessing a design database is illustrated in Fig. 2, as described in the specification at page 11, line 2 to page 13, line 1.

Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10, 14, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Admitted Prior Art (APA), specification at pages 2-4 and Figure 1.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is novel and patentable because, for instance, the prior art does not teach or suggest setting, by accessing via a communication device a design database with inputting product name and process name from a terminal and deriving design information from said database, an inspection condition; and inspecting the semiconductor device to detect defects with said inspection condition set by using design information derived from said design database. The "admitted prior art" describes manually setting the inspection condition and fails to teach or suggest the recited limitation.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 and claim 2 depending therefrom are patentable.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 4 is novel and patentable because, for instance, the prior art does not disclose or suggest setting inspection conditions by accessing via a communication device a design database with inputting product name and process name from a terminal and deriving design information of a semiconductor

device from said database; and inspecting the semiconductor device to detect defects with said inspection conditions set by using design information derived from said design database. As discussed above, the "admitted prior art" describes manually setting the inspection condition and fails to teach or suggest the recited limitation. For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 4 and claims 5-6 depending therefrom are patentable.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 7 is novel and patentable because, for instance, the prior art does not teach or suggest setting semiconductor device inspection conditions by accessing via a communication device a design database with inputting product name and process name from a terminal and deriving design information from said design database; and detecting defects by inspecting semiconductor devices using said set inspection conditions by using design information derived from said design database with an optical inspection tool. As discussed above, the "admitted prior art" describes manually setting the inspection condition and fails to teach or suggest the recited limitation. For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 7 and claims 8 and 10 depending therefrom are patentable.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 14 is patentable because, for instance, the prior art does not teach or suggest setting inspection conditions for a semiconductor device by accessing via a communication device a design database with inputting product name and process name from a terminal and deriving design information from said design database; and inspecting said semiconductor device under said set inspection conditions by using design information derived from said design database an optical inspection tool. As discussed above, the "admitted prior art" describes manually setting the inspection condition and fails to teach or suggest the recited limitation. For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 14 and claim 15 depending therefrom are patentable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

If the present amendment is not deemed to place the application in condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request a telephone interview with the Examiner prior to the issuance of the next office action, since Applicants made several attempts to schedule a telephone interview with the Examiner before the filing of the present amendment to no avail.

Respectfully submitted,



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